(b) whether the External Affairs Minister of Pakistan has said so in an interview to the BBC World News Service;

(c) whether he has also sent any communication to Government in that connection; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) and (b) Government have seen media reports in this regard.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The dialogue with Pakistan has been resumed at the Foreign Secretary level and, following the last round of discussions in Islamabad, a Joint statement was issued which envisages discussions on "peace and security" issues.

Keeping India's Nuclear option open

2515. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the recent US nuclear test and test firing of Hatf-III missiles by Pakistani, India have decided to keep open its nuclear options and the Agni missile programme;

(b) whether the Indian nuclear programme has fully developed technical capability in all requirement of the nuclear test cycle and whether our defence preparedness is upto the "marks"; and

(c) what is Governments reaction to participation in Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiation to be held in Geneva?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) and (b) Indias nuclear programme is extensive and exclusively geared towards peaceful purposes. Government remains fully committed to taking all necessary measures designed to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the nation. High priority is to be accorded to the next phase of the Agni programme, including efforts to augment its range.

(c) India has consistently called for a universal verifiable ban on production of fissionable material for weapons purpose and believes that a multilaterally negotiated, universally applicable and non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapon purposes should be part of a step by step process of global nuclear disarmament aimed at achieving the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

Delay in the examinations in Salem Medical College

2516. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA.

SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the new-item published in the Indian Express (New Delhi edition) dated July 6, 1997 under the caption, "1991 batch yet to take first MBBS exam in Salem College".

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the first batch of MBBS students of Vinayaga Mission's Kirupananda Variyar Medical College, Salem, admitted in 1991, are still waiting to write their MBBS first year examination, while students admitted to the course in later years have completed the course; and

(c) under what circumstances such a situation has arisen and what steps are being taken to help students of the 1991 batch to complete the course?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. An application was received

under the provisions of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, from the Secretary, Thriumuruga Kirupananda Variyar Thavathiru Sundara Swamigal Medical Educational and Charitable Trust, Salem on 13-9-1995 for establishment of a new medical college in the name of Vinayaka Mission's Kirupananda Variyar Medical College at Salem. The Government, on the recommendations of the Medical Council of India, accorded permission for the establishment of above college on 4-3-1996 from the academic year 1995-96.

Supply of medicines for four months at one time to chronic CGHS patients

2517. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Fifth Central Pay Commission has recommended that the CGHS beneficiary chronic patients, suffering from diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart trouble, etc., ought to be issued the prescribed medicines for months at one time;

(b) whether Government are implementing/purpose to implement this recommendation in the interest of both the beneficiaries as well as the CGHS dispensary staff, particularly in Delhi; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) The Fifth Central Pay Commission has recommended that the CGHS should supply medicines for atleast 3 months at a time to patients suffering from chronic disease. This recommendation is under consideration of Government.

Amendment of the prevention of food adulteration Act

2518. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act has been amended suitably to provide for exemplary punishment to the violators of the Act, keeping in view the rampant adulteration in milk and eatables; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954 has been amended three times in the past in order to plug the loopholes observed from time to time. The existing penal provisions contained in the said Act include imprisonment for life with a minimum fine of rupees five thousand depending upon the gravity of the offence. The Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955 already prohibit sale of milk or milk products containing extreneous/foreign substance. The Food Health Authorities of States/UTs have been asked to keep a vigil on quality of milk and eatables.

(b) Does not arise.

Reservation policy for SCs/STs in Dr. R. P. Unit of AIIMS

2519. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether reservation policy for SCs/STs has been followed in Dr. R. P. Unit of AIIMS, New Delhi for the post of Senior Residents on *ad-hoc* basis from July, 1994 to June, 1997; if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) how many SC/ST candidates have secured more marks than general category candidates in written tests and have been pushed back in the interview;

(c) whether Government have received any complaint in this regard; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken/is proposed to be taken by Government against the guilty officials and to